

YOUR WEEK IN CHINA'S CAPITAL

今日北京

BEIJING TODAY

HTTP://BEIJINGTODAY.COM.CN/

Bride Price Tradition on the Way Out?

After 3,000 years, the pinli tradition is giving way to "naked marriage." **Page 4**



The Cost of e-Payment Security

Security holes have cost e-payment users 1.5 billion yuan. **Page 5**



Schools Seem Built to Breed Cheats

China's 99 percent graduation rate has little to do with academic aptitude. **Page 6**



Whose Average?

For most Beijingers, the news that the city's "average" income surged 11.6 percent to 77,560 yuan was laughable.

After a decade of wage stagnation in most sectors, the city's long-promised accurate measures of income remain elusive.

Page 2



Cemetery Home Finds New Life as Brothel

BY WANG YAN

Earlier this month, a 58-year-old villager surnamed Li was shocked when he passed an apparently haunted home in Wushiling, an administrative division under Wenzhou, Zhejiang province.

"I saw a sudden light and dark shadows," Li told local media. "I thought the house was haunted so I left immediately."

Over the next few days, other villagers noticed similarly eerie happenings. The home's door was shut tight during the day, but when night fell there would be dim lights and human shadows. Villagers reported the situation to local police.

Police who investigated the house found used condoms in the nearby bushes and suspected the house was being used as a rural brothel.

On the night of June 9, police saw two women enter the house. About 30 minutes later, a thin man with two other middle-aged men arrived on his tricycle.

Police said the thin man brought the two into the house and waited outside. Around 10 minutes later, the two middle-aged men exited and left. Police say the thin man brought some other men to the house later that night.

Police raided the house and arrested five people, including two women, one



aged 41 and the other aged 28. A man surnamed Chen was later confirmed as the "organizer" of the brothel.

Chen is now held under criminal custody. The other four involved are detained on alleged "public security offences." ■

CHINESE STOCK INDEXES

SSE (Shanghai)

Close	Change	YTD
4,785.35	▼182.54 (3.67%)	+139.85%

SZSE (Shenzhen)

Close	Change	YTD
16,734.84	▼670.73 (3.85%)	+131.91%

HSI (Hong Kong)

Close	Change	YTD
26,694.66	▼59.13 (0.22%)	+18.69%

Accurate to market close on June 18, 2015





Photo by CFP

Beijing's 'Average' Income Anything but Average

BY DIAO DIAO

Beijingers were shocked by news this month that the city's average yearly income had surged to 77,560 yuan or about 6,463

yuan per month.

The report, a product of the Beijing Human Resources and Social Security Bureau and Beijing Statistical Infor-

mation Network, said income levels rose 11.6 percent across the city in the last year.

The Beijing Human Resources and Social Security Bureau said such years reports are used to calculate the base of social security insurance, retirement pensions and the minimum wage.

Employees of state-owned enterprises, associations, private enterprises, joint-stock companies and foreign investment companies were included in the average. Income was defined as one's basic salary, bonuses and other social welfare money paid by employers to the government combined.

Soon after the report was released, many netizens began complaining that their pay is far less than the "average" and that families were using the report to chastise them for being "poor earners."

But Tencent said the government's failure to strip outliers out of its average renders its figures meaningless.

A minority of super-earners has pushed the average up so high that the report no longer reflects the earnings of the working and middle class.

In an editorial, Tencent said the city's median income would better illustrate how the majority of Beijingers live. With 7 million workers in the capital, the city's median income would be equal to the earnings of its 3.5 millionth highest earner.

The call for disclosure of the median income is nothing new. Feng Nailin, director of the Population and Employment Statistics Division at National Bureau of Statistics, responded to the problem in 2009.

"The difference is huge, and we are planning to release both the median and the mode, as those will be easier for most people to agree upon and understand," Feng said.

Six years later, the median and mode of Beijing's income remain unknown. ■



Photo by Sina

100-year-old begs to Buy Son a Home

BY QU CHAONAN

A photo of China's "oldest beggar" was one of the most forwarded images on Sina Weibo last week. The man, seen in front of an elementary school in Zhengzhou, Henan province, displays an ID card showing his age as 103.

The post said Geng had no family in his hometown of Shangqiu, Henan province and appealed to the government for help.

But an investigation by the Shangqiu government found Geng's story to be considerably different.

In a post on its official Weibo account, a spokesperson for the township revealed that Geng has three sons and two daughters. His eldest son has two houses, his second son owns a business in the township and his youngest son has three houses.

Geng lives with his youngest son and receives a 360 yuan monthly subsidy from the government, which is enough to support himself in the countryside.

"My youngest son is poor. I wanted to help him by begging outside. I have been begging for almost four years. I come home every 20 days and collect 10,000 to 20,000 yuan per year," Geng said.

His youngest son built a two-floor home several months ago. Most of its 120,000 construction cost was covered by Geng's earnings as a beggar. Geng does not live in the house, preferring to stay in his old home whenever he makes the trip back to Shangqiu.

"My right arm is disabled and my wife has mental problems. We work on the farm to feed our two children. My eldest brother has cerebral thrombosis, and my second brother is in prison," said Geng's youngest son, aged 48. "My father used to beg with the locals. This time he asked to beg outside by himself and I helped to put him on a bus." ■

(Qu Chaonan is an interviewer at Beijing Today.)

Chaoyang's Intelligence Operation Steps Out of the Shadows

BY YANG XIN

The list of global intelligence organizations appears to be getting a new member. CIA, KGB, MOSSAD and MI6, meet Beijing's BJCYQZ.

While it hardly rolls off the tongue, it is the official abbreviation of the Beijing Chaoyang Qunzhong. The Chaoyang District organization is making headlines after a celebrity host's death by drug overdose on June 12.

But the group's roots go back to at least the 1970s.

On January 15, 1974, BJCYQZ joined the Beijing Police to capture a group of Soviet spies who had set up a spy center on East Third Ring. Evidence collected by the BJCYQZ led police to target diplomats from the Soviet Union Embassy.

Its recent work seems less focused on espionage than China's escalating war on drugs.

In August 2013, local police arrested Xue Manzi, a web celebrity known for bringing prostitutes to his home, following a tip from the BJCYQZ. Their



Photo by gmw.cn

information has also aided high-profile drug busts involving Li Daimo, Ning Caishen, Wang Xuebing, Huang Haibo and Wang Quan'an.

In May, the BJCYQZ brought down a mid-ranking cadre who was charged with possessing and using hard drugs.

Of the Beijing Police's 926 drug-related arrested from April to July 2014, 80 percent were based on tips from the BJCYQZ.

But in spite of the group's contributions in maintaining public security, they were mostly kept secret until May, when the Beijing Police posted an official announcement on Weibo

that called the BJCYQZ "an indispensable supportive power of the city's public security sector."

Reporters from the Beijing Youth Daily visited a model BJCYQZ investigation community in Chaoyang to learn more about the secret intelligence group.

The community's first layer of guards is a group of 200 residents and store-owners armed with armbands. They are backed up by 120 plainclothes Communist Party members assigned to blend in with other elderly and middle-aged community members.

These groups are supplemented by another 70 to 80 full-time security guards who patrol 24 hours a day. The final protective screen is a volunteer patrol group of up to 500 public security personnel.

Since the government is sued its Incentives for the Masses Reporting on Terrorism and Violence circular last March, Beijing Police have disbursed 400,000 yuan in awards to informants who provided tips that led to arrests. ■

Substandard Water Sent to Universities

BY WANG LINGXIAO

More than 10 barrels of fake water bearing the logos of top brands were delivered to schools in Haidian District on June 3.

University students are some of the largest consumers of barreled water, and water salesmen routinely bring their barrels onto campus to sell to dorm residents.

Prices for the fake bottles ranged from 10 to 18 yuan.

"It was definitely not safe water," said a water vendor working at the university. "Brands like Wahaha are never sold for less than 22 yuan. You can't make any profit when you sell it for 18 yuan or less."

Beijing Wahaha Barreled Water Company confirmed that 22 yuan is its recommended price for barreled water.

An investigation by the *Beijing News* found that the water was supplied by illegal factories with the support of print shops, which helped to forge anti-counterfeit codes and labels.

"A label with fake anti-counterfeit code only costs 0.03 yuan," a print shop operator who refused to be named told the *Beijing News*.

The barrels themselves were actually from the real water companies. On May 21, 78 empty barrels were investigated in Xiaohongmen, Chaoyang District, but none could be identified as fakes.

"Some water stations purchase the real brands' barrels with a pledge of 30 yuan per barrel. Then they send these real-brand barrels to illegal water factories and refill them repeatedly," said Ye Changqing, director of a water company's anti-counterfeit office.

Real barrels sent to illegal factories are often stacked in unsanitary areas and filled with water that has not been properly disinfected.

"The food safety laws are still not implemented very well," said Liu Xinwu, a lawyer. "It's hard to crack down on counterfeiters when the law only punishes those whose deception results in tragedy." ■

(Wang Lingxiao is an intern at Beijing Today.)



Passenger Sues Subway Management Over Broken Leg

A Beijing woman surnamed Zhao is suing the city's subway management company after her rush to grab a seat caused her to tumble and break her leg on the train.

Zhao is demanding 60,000 yuan, or full compensation for her medical costs, as well as a full-time position working in the subway. The subway initially offered to compensate only 10 percent of her medical costs.

Her lawyer said that the subway ticket represents a contractual safety agreement between the subway operator and the passenger, and that management is thus contractually obligated to ensure passenger safety.

(Tencent News)

Anhui Man Earns 200K as Professional Apologizer

Lei Bin drew sneers when he opened his online business in 2013. As one of the many "special services" shops that popped up during that year, Lei's shop dealt in feelings.

In the last five months, Lei has earned 200,000 yuan by providing break-up messages, apologies and expressions of affection. For an additional 500 yuan he will even take a beating. His first beating was delivered last year in Shaoxing, Zhejiang province, when he was battered till his whole face swelled up.

Most of his services are less violent. He has also been hired to pray for the dead or make trips to tombs on behalf of disabled people.

(Tencent News)

Chongqing Party Animal Loses License Within 24 Hours

If you are going to throw a banquet to celebrate getting your license, take a taxi or find a designated driver. This free lesson comes courtesy of a man surnamed Tan, who lost his license in less than 24 hours after two years of work.

Tan began studying for his C1 class driver's license at the end of 2013. It took him two years to complete driver's training since he could only attend class on the weekends.

To thank his instructor and celebrate with friends, Tan threw a banquet complete with two cases of beer. Five bottles through the night, Tan decided to drive his guests home in spite of his instructor's repeated warnings.

On the way home, Tan hit a traffic stop where police required him to blow on a breathalyzer. Police then arrested him for driving drunk.

Police took Tan's license, banned him from the road for six months, canceled his probationary C1 license and fined him 1,000 yuan for the infraction.

(China.org)

Plastic Surgery Spike Follows the Gaokao

BY QU CHAONAN

With the 2015 National College Entrance Exam over, high school graduates have entered an interim period of parties, shopping, traveling and plastic surgery.

Many plastic institutions centers are reportedly swarmed with students seeking consultations. *China News* reported that 90 percent are females seeking double eyelid surgery or nose jobs.



CFP Photos

"By a conservative estimate, our hospital may finish several thousand plastic operations during the summer holiday," said Wang Yongqian, deputy director of the Orthopedic Department at the Plastic Surgery Hospital affiliated with the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences.

"I did nine operations yesterday and seven were for high school graduates,"

said Wang Lin, director of plastic surgery at Dalian Municipal Central Hospital. "In recent years, as soon as the Gaokao ends, graduates flock to do cosmetic surgery. This year the boom came earlier."

"Cosmetic surgeries mainly include eyelid surgeries, nose jobs, face lifts and freckle or scar removal," said Wang Lin.

"There are students who take celebrities' photos and ask for similar faces. One girl wanted her eyes to look like Park Chan Yeol's, one of the boys in the Korean idol group EXO. I persuaded her to give up that idea," Wang said. Many teens seek a new appearance for college. Parents are willing to pay in hopes that they will be more competitive when hunting for work.

"The summer holiday after Gaokao is a golden period for those undergraduates-to-be. They can make use of the 3 months to recover after their operations and start their new life," a netizen said. ■

(Qu Chaonan is an intern at Beijing Today.)



Photo by yinxifangwedding.blogspot.jpblogpage.html

Pinli Tradition on the Way Out?

BY SHU PENGQIAN

Tencent.com reported on a property dispute in Tongchuan, Shaanxi province, when a couple who were engaged to be married broke of their relationship on June 3.

The groom demanded a return of his bride price, but the woman refused.

Disputes over exchanged property following failed engagements are nothing new, but what to do with the bride price, or *pinli*, is an especially common source of fights.

History of Pinli

The traditional custom of pinli dates back beyond recorded history. Roughly translated, it is the present or money offered by a bridegroom to the bride's family before an engagement ceremony or wedding.

Anthropologists postulate that in early farming societies, the bride price originated as a way to compensate a father for the reduction in his labor force that came with taking a bride.

The process was first formalized during the Western Zhou Dynasty (1046-771 BC), when Ji Dan, the younger brother of Emperor Wu, set up a rites system that formalized society's hierarchy.

The rites divided the wedding process into six parts. Nazheng, the process of the bridegroom sending pinli to the

bride's family, was the fourth step in marriage and the most important. An unsatisfactory pinli could end an engagement.

Changing Times

In the earliest days, people's major activity was hunting. Pinli at that time was connected with the lifestyle, and fowl, beasts or deer pelts were the main items used as pinli.

The Book of Songs, a Chinese poetry collection from roughly the same time as the Western Zhou, records a poem "Zhaonan" about a man proposing to a girl with a pinli of a wild deer. The poem "Weifeng Min" references cloth and silk instead.

During the Warring States Period (475-221 BC), currency began to appear in pinli offerings. By the Han Dynasty (BC 202-AD 220), people were adding gold.

In the Sui and Tang dynasties (AD 581-907), pinli diversified to include jewelry, silk fabrics and bedclothes. In the following Song Dynasty (AD 960-1279), tea leaves were a popular pinli.

After the hard times of the early 1900s, pinli became more practical. "What my family received from my husband was a kilogram of sugar and four yuan," said one woman who married in the 1960s.

By the 1970s, a sewing machine, bicycle and wristwatch were the three mandatory pinli gifts. A decade later

how the times changes: a comb, ruler, a steelyard, a mirror, scissors, an abacus, a cash box, embroidered satin shoes and a *dou*, a kind of cup for measuring grain.

Due to the auspicious meaning of nines and doubled numbers, the number of pinli gifts is usually doubled.

War Over Pinli

Generally speaking, the size of a pinli depends on the bridegroom's economic situation.

Ancient China had a very strict social hierarchy, and people were forbidden to marry outside their class. The value of one's pinli would never exceed the bridegroom's ability.

But that hierarchy fell apart with the end of feudal times, and the modern pinli has become increasingly extravagant with many families seeing it as a chance to build face and show off.

To impress their relatives, the bride's family usually asks the bridegroom to prepare costly pinli. Luxury cars and housing are absolutely required, even if the groom's family can afford neither. This forces most couples to enter their marriage with a heavy debt.

On an Internet forum discussing pinli, a man surname Zhao shared his experience. "We had dated for two years and intended to hold our wedding in 2011," Zhao said. The woman's family demanded an additional 66,000 yuan, which emptied his savings and left him unable to secure a loan to buy a home. In the end, Zhao and his girlfriend were forced to separate.

In other cases, desperate bridegrooms have turned to crime to acquire the necessary money. A man surname Chen in Hunan province murdered and robbed his colleague to get money for his wedding.

"Marriage has been an auction. Unless the pinli is satisfying, the family will wait for a higher bidder," netizens joked.

Recently, more young people in big cities have been opposing their parents' request for pinli preferring to settle for a good match. "My husband was too poor to send pinli before we got married," said a woman surnamed Gao. "Neither my parents nor I cared. He loves me. That's enough."

Pinli's recent decline is being replaced by "naked marriage," a marriage with no pinli, no wedding and no ring – nothing other than a certificate.

This concept goes against the older generation's traditional thought, but young people born in the new times are putting the quality of relationships over the value of gifts.

The Chinese TV series *Naked Wedding* captured modern feelings about pinli with its "I have no saloon car, no money, no house and no ring, but I have a sincere heart."

News commentator Yin Janguang said the idea of "naked marriage" represented a step forward in wedding culture. "It pulls ancient wedding tradition out of the shadow of vanity. That is a symbol of a civilization progressing." ■

(Shu Pengqian is an intern at Beijing Today.)



Photo by dixiao.orgzxdnews120141207763.html



Photo by lnystn.com

it changes to a washing machine, TV and refrigerator, and then to a computer, motorcycle and air conditioner.

Today, most brides demand a house, a luxury car and money.

However, there are nine articles that reside permanently in pinli list no matter

Security Woes Cost Mobile Payment Users 1.5B Yuan

BY WANG LINGXIAO

Mobile payment is becoming increasingly popular in China, with Alipay and WeChat Payment among the most used apps on Chinese phones.

From paying bills to ordering food or booking a taxi, many common consumer transactions are being settled entirely in the digital domain. But although convenient, Alipay and WeChat have not been immune to theft.

In January, an 18-year-old in the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region was charged with the theft of numerous users' identities and nearly 1.5 billion yuan.

Last year, police in Yangzhou, Jiangsu province announced that one user had more than 60,000 yuan stolen from his account in spite of never being notified of any transaction. Police investigation revealed that the money was used for online purchases.

Personal Information

For most users, online payments are completed using a username, password, payment password, phone number and digital certificate.

But that information can be hard to keep secure.

A network security agency in Beijing recently studied a number of the thefts exposed in popular media and realized a common problem: most users gave away their account information by carelessly publishing personal information or completing their payments using insecure networks.

Many of the most common Chinese computer viruses are a class of programs trojans, which can allow the hacker to control a user's terminal or snoop on the data they send to websites.

Payment processes often involve a verification code, but phone apps with trojan programs can intercept these messages and forward them to hackers.

Most smartphones on the market are based on the iOS or Android operating systems, but both feature loopholes that can put users' safety at risk.

"Hackers often set up fake Wi-Fi points with the hope that users will connect to them and begin sending informa-

tion online. Any page they fetch through the Wi-Fi point can have malicious program data injected into it," said Zhuge Jianwei, a mobile security expert at Tsinghua University.

"By taking advantage of bugs in the browsers, it's possible to inject a new Trojan program into the phone that will give the hacker root level control," he said.

When the user enters his Alipay account and password on an infected phone, this information will be sent to the hacker's computer. The verification code ends up losing its purpose.

Allowing the payment platforms to bind with a bank account for fast payment knocks down the bank's final line of defense. A hacker with access to such an account can steal money from the user's platform account and bank account.

Interest Chains

Last September, a man surnamed Song called the police when all the money in his bank and Alipay accounts vanished overnight.

An investigation led to the arrests of three people surnamed Qian, Chen and Yue.

In July 2014, Qian joined a chat group called "Xi Liao" and met other hackers who were skilled at intercepting Alipay Accounts, passwords, phone

numbers and ID information. That September, Qian spent 2,300 yuan to buy five blocks of intercepted information from Yue, including some data that Yue acquired from Song.

Chen was in charge of making fake ID cards. Armed with an ID card, Qian went to a local China Mobile Hall to reissue Song's phone number without any trouble. Then Qian transferred all of Song's money to his own account.

Law for Compensation

Even though the payment platforms like Alipay promised to compensate in full within 72 hours, it's hard for every victim to enforce his or her rights.

One user who lost 50,000 yuan through Alipay was refused compensation by the platform. He filed a police report, but after two months there was no progress.

"The police told me it was a high-tech crime and would be hard to investigate," the user said. "I went to the telecom department to get a certificate that would prove the verification message came from Chengdu, but the department said I could only get it after the case was closed."

"Even if we end up arresting anyone, we will still have to lodge a complaint at the procuratorate and court. Then the lost money can be compensated, but it will take a long time," said a police offi-

cer in Jihang, Yangzhou.

Security problems are hardly unique to China. Last September, Apple's system was attacked by hackers who released hundreds of Hollywood stars' private pictures. Previously, the *Guangzhou Daily* reported that iOS had a security hole that made it possible to retrieve the messages, address books and photos of iPhone users.

In this case, the payment platform Apple Pay was at fault. A survey by CreditCards.com reported that more than 60 percent of Americans never or hardly ever use their mobile phones to pay bills, even though Apple promised to protect users' data.

Security problems with mobile payments are increasingly serious in the Internet era. To minimize the threats and losses, users are advised to carefully guard their personal information.

"Never use payment platforms or scan strange QR codes in free Wi-Fi environments. Otherwise you might end up on a phishing website. It's also a bad idea to put too much money in any bank account that you bind to an online platform," experts said on CCTV's Weekly Quality Report.

They also advised users to suspend their payment account if their phone is lost or has no signal for a prolonged period. ■

(Wang Lingxiao is an intern at Beijing Today.)



Photo by CFP



Photo by asiaone.com

Easy Colleges Training China's Cheaters

BY YANG XIN

Chinese international students are gradually losing their once-shining image in US universities due to a controversial report about alleged academic dishonesty.

Alarming Situation

As many as 8,000 Chinese students were given the boot by US universities in the last year, according to a 54-page report by WholeRen, a Pennsylvania-based education consultancy which caters to Chinese students in the US.

The number of Chinese students attending US universities in the 2013-2014 school year was 274,439, according to the International Institute of Education. Andrew Chen, chief development officer of WholeRen, said 3 percent of those students' studies ended in expulsion.

"Chinese students used to be considered top-notch, but over the past five years their image has become one of wealthy kids who cheat," Chen says.

Chinese media came out swinging to defend the country's students.

But no matter whether the WholeRen's disputed report is entirely accurate, it does point out a painful shortcoming: Chinese schools are easy, and their way of playing fast and loose with the rules breeds academic dishonesty.

No Student Left Behind

Statistics from the Institute of Education Science show that the 6-year graduation rate for first-time, full-time undergraduate students in the US is 56 percent.

The most common reason for termination of enrollment was a lack of adequate academic progress. Students who have a cumulative GPA of less than 2.0 at the end of two semesters or less than 1.0 in one semester are dismissed.

Each university in the US has its own academic probation policy, and stu-



Unwillingness to follow the rules is hurting many of China's international students.

Photo by Sina Blog

dents are required to familiarize themselves with it. Students, who are not making adequate academic progress, in some cases, will be warned in writing of the possibility of dismissal even before they end up on academic probation.

China, by contrast, may have the lowest college dropout rate in the world. According to an evaluation report by MYCOS, a third-party education consultancy based in Beijing in 2011, China's university dropout rate is just 3 percent. More surprisingly, the Ministry of Education denied that "high rate" by saying that the true proportion was 0.75 percent.

"Universities are held accountable for making sure people graduate in China," says Yong Zhao, a professor at the University of Oregon who researches China's education system. "Dropping out of college is almost unheard of. If you fail, it's a failure of everyone."

In 2013, the *Economic Observer* shared the experience of one American who was teaching at a well-known public university in China from 2010 to 2011. The teacher, who spoke on conditions of ano-

nymity, said he was prohibited from failing a student who never came to class once during the entire semester and who skipped the final exam.

"The director basically gave me an 'either you do it or we will do it' type answer," he told the *Economic Observer*. "I was even told to pass on this information to other teachers. In fact, if a student failed another teacher's class and that teacher refused to change [the grade], they had another teacher change it. I had to do this multiple times. We would have a make-up test (usually five minutes) and I would give them a grade."

"When I was graduating from university, one of my classmates who failed all the exams still graduated successfully," says Yu Hailiang, a Northeastern University graduate. "All he needed to do was hand 200 yuan to the school for the make-up test fee and the school agreed to pass him as long as he showed up and scribbled something on test sheet."

Li Baoyuan, a professor of labor economics at Beijing Normal University, compared Chinese universities to state-

2015留美中国学生现状白皮书

开除学生群体状况分析

White Paper on Dismissal Issues of Chinese Students in the United States 2015



Photo by WholeRen

owned enterprises of the 1980s, saying they're inefficiently controlled by bureaucracies and prone to politicking. Professors are more concerned with climbing the ranks and furthering their own careers than taking time to evaluate their students properly, he said.

"It has something to do with Chinese culture and a low respect for rules," Li says. "In my opinion, many unqualified students still get a degree."

Others write it off as a side effect of China's rigorous college entrance exam system and family support.

At any rate, Chinese universities are churning out a glut of unqualified graduates who are saturating an already dismal job market.

Corrective Trend

At the beginning of 2013, Shandong University did the unthinkable move and threw out 97 of its 43,000 undergraduates for "poor academic performance after frequent warnings." Eighty-one were given reprieve to graduate if they sign a "letter of commitment" to complete their classwork with a year.

Many have supported Shandong University's move. More have criticized it for not going far enough.

The university's crackdown on unqualified students may be a sign of things to come for top schools wanting to improve the perceived worth of their degrees.

Sang Guoyuan, an associate professor at Beijing Normal University (BNU), says his school's students now face severe punishments and even expulsion when caught cheating. Some schools have even instituted quotas on the proportion of students that must fail certain classes.

But so far, that doesn't appear to be dissuading many young Chinese from chasing a college degree. And a higher dropout rate won't prevent schools from taking criticism on other academic fronts. ■



Bukatrise

Beijing Music Day Brings Out French-Style Musical Party

BY YANG XIN

Beijing Music Day, an annual festival of musical discovery and entertainment, begins this Sunday.

The city has been a Fete de la Musique destination since 2012. This year, the festival includes dozens of concerts across the city that will be free to attend on June 21.

Events run morning to night across the city, with the majority being concentrated in the Gulou area, Sanlitun and the artistic punk sanctuary of Tongzhou.

The International Festival Chorus and Orchestra and alternative choir Bukatrise will perform a repertoire of French classical music and electro beat-boxing at their respective events. Some of Beijing's top hip-hop crews, such as Nasty Ray, J-Fever and A-Mac, will also be participating.

The festival features some of the most promising bands to come out of Beijing last year, including the fun-loving Maoxuewang and Zhang San + Band. Foreign acts include the British duo Luv Plastik and 1984.

As a significant part of the 2015 Festival Croisements, Beijing Music Day is organized by Jeune Chambre Economique de Pekin (JCEF) and boasts a large network of venues with the support of the French embassy in Beijing.

The flow of music echoes the event's initial goal when it was created in 1982. Fete de la Musique is meant to stimulate the music scene by making music accessible to a large public, offering platforms for up-and-coming bands to show off their skills while giving visibility to live music venues.

Beijing Music Day will include 25 venues all over the city and three outdoor stages to connect the event to its original French concept.

A new addition to this year's festival is a huge public workshop aimed to enable the city's music-lovers to contribute, in their own way, to the musical spectrum set to rock the Chinese capital.

More information about recommended routes or family itineraries is available on beijingmusicday.com. ■



Red Cash



J-Fever



1984



Luv Plastik

Photos by Fete de la Musique Beijing

Chinese Cities in German Eyes

BY QU CHAONAN

The German embassy in Beijing is hosting a joint exhibition to compare daily life in Chinese metropolises from German and Chinese viewpoints. The exhibition will run through July 24.

Chinese Huang Min is displaying five oil paintings about the Beijing Heiqiao Art Zone, while German artist Detlef Waschkaw shows more than 10 wood engravings of the Chinese urban landscape.

The artists draw on their different cultural backgrounds and use their art language to interpret Chinese society and



comment on the topics of urban space, architecture and the relationship between residents and urban development.

Huang was named "the most amazing Chinese female artist" by *German Daily Bild*. She is famed for her ability to capture slight social changes in daily life with her paintings on linen, Chinaware and rice paper.

As a sculptor and painter, Waschkaw is known for his skill at analyzing city life. The *German Daily Mirror* called his works "well-thought-out and immersive."

"China and Germany have had diplomatic relations for many years and we both think we know each other. But in reality, we have not looked deep into each other's cultures, where art is the best bridge," said Michael Clauss, German ambassador.

"Huang Min and Detlef Waschkaw have different life experiences, but China is their common background for this show. Huang's drawings contain elements of China and observations specific to some areas. She looks at problems from the perspective of modern civil rights. Waschkaw



Photos by the German Embassy in Beijing

also focuses on the daily life of ordinary Chinese people. As a foreigner, he is more sensitive to how the living environment and conditions are different from Germany," said curator Du Xiyun. ■

BYCI Holds 1st Outdoor Challenge for Beijing University Students



Eighteen teams from different Beijing universities met at the Miyun Campsite, a branch of Beijing Youth Camp International (BYCI), to compete in the first Outdoor Challenge for Beijing University Students on June 5.

After three days of events, students from Beijing Jiaotong University won the championship to obtain the Challenger Cup. China Agricultural University, Beijing University of Agriculture and Beijing University of Technology placed second, third and fourth.

Each university had held preliminaries events on its own campus to select the best students.

Events tested competitors' teamwork, endurance and survival skills in camping, orienteering and first-aid events.

Competition events were selected to help students put their knowledge into practice, develop their potential and make friends.

"Although my team failed to win the first place, I made new friends with same ideals and interests. I hope I can join in such outdoor activities again," said Zhang Hanfang, a competitor from Capital University of Economics and Business. "I felt upset because I did not fulfill the task to lead my teammates to achieve the final success. But my teammates did not blame me and continued to support me. I am very grateful for that," said Yu Feng, from Beijing University of Agriculture.

Victory or defeat was not important, said BYCI organizers. What students learned from the competition was the real purpose.

Sponsors invited Luo Xu, host of Beijing TV, to comment on the match and a professional team to record the games. The program will be broadcast on *Tencent.com*, *ifeng.com* and *youku.com* in August and September. ■ (By Shu Pengqian)



BEIJING TODAY
eDigest | 《今日北京》电子文摘

Beijing Today eDigest is distributed globally via email.

As of February 20, 2015, the eDigest has been delivered to 102,000 readers per issue since its launch on August 1, 2013.

- 今日北京电子文摘—eDigest于2013年8月正式上线；
- 精选内容每周五通过电子邮件点对点全球精准投递；
- eDigest的读者主要包括全球主要英语国家读者、各国使馆外交官、国际商务人士、国际文化交流人士及国际知名高校学者学生等；
- 截止到2015年2月20日，eDigest全球有效受众达到102,000人/期。



For free subscription, please send your contact information to info@beijingtoday.com.cn

Hotline: +86 (10) 6590 2515 Fax: +86 (10) 6590 2525